

STATINTL

Without Control, The C.I.A. Will Be A Headache

IT IS GOOD to see that President Kennedy is pushing ahead with his plan to reorganize the Central Intelligence Agency. Unfortunately, his reported plan is not very satisfactory.

The C.I.A. is far more than a spy outfit. Indeed, it has become something of a little government within itself, responsible to almost no one. It carries on global spying activities without responsibility to the Department of Justice, the Department of State or the Department of Defense. It makes and carries out foreign policy without responsibility to, and often in conflict with the State Department. It organizes and engages in military activities without responsibility to the Department of Defense. At times it develops and carries on its own independent foreign-aid program.

Diplomats' Morale Impaired

In the process it has become a source of trouble, embarrassment and impaired morale in diplomatic circles. An example, aside from the U-2 and Cuban invasion fiascos, was the program in which the C.I.A., without telling the State Department, organized and armed Chinese Nationalists in northern Burma. When the Burmese protested that the arms were being used by the Chinese to destroy local authorities and protect a growing Chinese opium trade, the U. S. Ambassador denied any knowledge of it. Only when Burma threatened to break off relations with the U. S. and take the matter to the U. N. did the C.I.A. admit the involvement. Our Ambassador, humiliated, resigned.

The key word here is "responsibility." The basic danger in having an independent cloak-and-dagger organization is that it can operate without regard for the policies being hammered out in Congress and by the Administration. The President's plan does not correct this flaw. It would, reportedly, permit the C.I.A. to continue both its intelligence and its military functions. It would change the top leadership of the agency. Its director would report directly to the President's military adviser, General Maxwell Taylor. And in its overseas functions it would come under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Ambassador in each foreign capital.

State Department Responsibility

This doesn't make much sense. If the C.I.A. official overseas is responsible to the State Department Ambassador in his area, why shouldn't the entire operation be responsible to the State Department, so that activities can be co-ordinated and policy decided at the top level?

It undoubtedly makes sense to replace the present top leaders in the C.I.A. They are not only responsible for the blunders committed by the agency, but symbols of a policy that must be changed. It makes sense to continue the C.I.A. as a top data-gathering and co-ordinating agency, to correlate the spy activities of the F.B.I., the State Department and the intelligence agencies of the military. But it is a logical part of the State Department's operation. It operates in the area of foreign policy for which the State Department has responsibility.

And as long as it is permitted to form policy on its own, so long will it be a source of trouble and possible danger.